

Student Finance Wales (SFW) relates to Welsh domiciled students studying higher education courses at universities or colleges in the UK

If you've not been under the legal care of your parents at any point from the age of 14 and 16 to the first academic year of your course; and, for three months or more you will be classed as an independent student for student finance purposes if you've been:

- in the legal care of a local authority
- in the custody of a local authority
- been given accommodation by a local authority
- placed in the care of foster parents by a local authority

If you have returned to live with your parents but are still under the care of the local authority you can still be deemed an independent student.

If you are granted independent student status, we will not ask you to provide your sponsor income to work out your entitlement to maintenance grants and loans.

## How do I know if I qualify for Care Leaver status?

If you started your course on or after 1 August 2018, you can apply for student finance as a care leaver if:

- You have not been under the legal care of your parents at any point from the age of 14 to the first day of the first academic year of your course and for 13 weeks, you have been in the custody, legal care or have been given accommodation by a local authority.
- *At any point between the ages of 14 and 16 (before the start of your course) you have been back in the legal care of your parents; you will still be considered as a care leaver.*

If you've been officially adopted, we will use the household income details of your adoptive parent(s) to work out how much you can get.

## How do I apply as a Care Leaver student?

You should submit a signed and dated letter from the local authority, or your case worker/social worker on letter headed paper, confirming:

- you were under local authority care (this includes being placed in foster care by your local authority)
- you are a care leaver under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014
- the dates you were in care
- from the age of 16 you've not returned to the care of your parent(s) prior to the first day of the first academic year of your course

SFW are unable to accept residency orders as they do not confirm the relevant information.

## What else do I need to know?

Universities and colleges can also provide care leaver student support. You can talk with advisers who are usually found within the Student Services, Student Wellbeing or Student Union Teams at your university or college. There is also independent support available from Class Cymru.

## Important links

CLASS Cymru: [www.classcymru.co.uk](http://www.classcymru.co.uk)

UCAS: [www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/individual-needs/care-experienced-students](http://www.ucas.com/applying/applying-university/individual-needs/care-experienced-students)

EaCES: [www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/imo/your-stories/estranged-and-care-experienced-students/](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/imo/your-stories/estranged-and-care-experienced-students/)